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EXCERPTS

8 JUL 1968

copy
The Honorable George M. Mahon, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

You were so helpful last fall when I discussed the problems of Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL) with you that I thought you might now be interested in a report on what they have been doing in the past six months.

RFE has ceased its mass solicitation for funds and no question has been publicly raised about either radio's financing. Furthermore, during the past six months the radios have shown that they are a primary source of news in their respective target areas.

1. Former Ambassador Gronowski cabled from Warsaw during the student demonstrations some weeks ago that as much as 40-50 percent of the student population followed RFE for news of the riots, particularly in quest of information from other parts of the country, and that its news broadcasts were "especially appreciated by the Polish audience." Another Warsaw report stated that many Poles were full of praise for RFE's coverage of the news, noting particularly that RFE broadcasts obliged the Polish media to react hastily in their own news treatment, with considerable fumbling as they attempted to present their version of the facts.

Ambassador Hillenbrand in Budapest reported that RFE has unquestionably furnished its Hungarian audience with more, and more timely, information on the Polish riots and Czech liberalization than the local media. Further information received from the Embassy in Budapest indicates that RFE's public appeal seems to be increasing in Hungary, and that, in spite of the regime's displeasure, Hungarian officials listen to it regularly and probably use it as a gauge of public sentiment and reactions.

Approved for Release

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Letters from listeners, broadcast by Radio Prague and monitored by RFE, reveal the Czechoslovak public's extreme interest in the possible cessation of jamming of RFE. In response to their expressions, the Czechoslovak Minister of the Interior announced that jamming would halt. Later he modified this to apply only to "legal foreign broadcasts" but, although he specifically excluded RFE as an "illegal" radio station, he obliquely indicated that jamming of it too might cease in time. Recently, RFE monitors have noted that jamming of the special midnight broadcast targeted at Czechoslovak intellectuals has in fact stopped.

Testimony to the efficacy of radio in general--and RFE in particular--came recently in response to Secretary Rusk's 12 June request to all U. S. diplomatic missions for suggestions on specific ways for the United States to call attention to its efforts in the Paris talks with North Vietnam. Ambassador Millenbrand replied that the official media of the countries of East Europe are offset by widespread listening to foreign broadcasts and recommended that maximum feasible attention be given to publicizing the U. S. position on RFE and VOA. The Embassy in Warsaw reported that "with respect to the Polish public, we feel that U. S. broadcast media--which are the most effective means of reaching broad elements of the Polish [population]--should continue full factual coverage of the Paris talks and other developments relating to Vietnam."

RFE's main programming base is located in Munich and its relations with the West German government are excellent. Dr. Frank Ruete, head of the Bonn Foreign Office's Political Department II with responsibility for East European affairs, told RFE officials on 3 April: "We consider that RFE continues to have an important role to play, even in a period marked by a certain process of detente. You have great responsibilities and we know that you are well aware of them."

II. Systematic efforts to measure and evaluate Radio Liberty's listening audience in the Soviet Union have demonstrated that during the first six months of 1968, RL reached more people with greater impact than ever before. Further advances are likely when, in a technological breakthrough, four existing 250-kilowatt transmitters in Spain are banded together to form a single megawatt transmitter, which should pierce the currently available jamming in the Moscow area

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where the elite target audience resides. Preliminary monitoring by our Embassy in Moscow of initial tests with the new signal indicates that the broadcasts are reaching the center of Moscow with unprecedented strength.

Radio Liberty's principal programming priorities in the last six months have centered on Soviet intellectual ferment and on the East European developments. A regular flow of protest documents from the Russian and Ukrainian intellectual underground has been acquired by RL and broadcast back to the USSR, often at dictation speed, to be recorded and disseminated to the internal audience. In April, the Russian poet Yevtushenko, speaking with a representative of Radio Liberty in Paris, complimented RL for its coverage of East European developments and Soviet intellectual ferment. He urged RL to broadcast more protest documents from Soviet intellectuals and, on Eastern Europe,

to broadcast the facts, facts and more facts. Everything that happens on Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania—everything in detail, in order that people in our country should know that it is possible to move toward democracy without slaughter and revolution, but calmly and intelligently.

Our most recent Soviet defector, a writer and literary critic who was a colleague of Binyavskiy and Daniel, has told us categorically that Western radio is the most important single source of stimuli to the thought and the morale of the Soviet intelligentsia. He believes the West should be doing much more through the medium of radio to communicate with, inform, and encourage the Soviet listening audience.

In recent months, the USSR propaganda activities, singled out "CIA-sponsored" media and Radio Liberty by name for "misleading and confusing" Soviet youth. Speaking in Minsk on 14 February 1968, Premier Kosygin warned that foreign radio broadcasts were trying to drive "a wedge between the generations." Other indications of a widespread youth problem, undoubtedly influenced by the flow of information from abroad, have come from Georgia, Moldavia, and the Ukraine.

In the fall and winter of 1967-68, RL gave more extensive reporting on Soviet persecution of Ukrainian nationalist intellectuals than any other radio station broadcasting to the Soviet Union. A. D. Skaba, Ukrainian

Party Secretary responsible for ideological and cultural affairs, was denoted on 29 March 1968, and Radio Kiev was obliged to present a special interview with an official of the Ukrainian prosecutor's office to answer listeners' questions which, according to the broadcast, stemmed from the "noisy sensation" created by the foreign press and radio about the trials of Ukrainian intellectuals.

III. You will recall that last fall it was decided to fund the two radios through 30 June 1969 while alternative arrangements for their sponsorship and financing beyond FY 1969 were explored. In the six months since this decision to continue their operations, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, as shown above, have demonstrated their continuing effectiveness. I will keep you informed of any progress we are able to make toward solving the problem of what is to be done with these valuable instruments in FY 1970.

Respectfully,

/s/ Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Director

DDP [] (5 July 1968) b₃

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